MARRAKECH
جامعة القاضي عياض
UNIVERSITÉ CADI AYYAD

كليـــة الآداب والعلوم
الإنسانيـــة – مراكش
FACULTÉ DES LETTRES ET DES
SCIENCES HUMAINES– MARRAKECH

Readings in Global Culture

Semester 3

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Week 3

Introduction

This presentation provides an overview of cultural studies, key theories, influential figures, and critical perspectives that shape our understanding of culture today.

01

Cultural Theory

Overview of Cultural Studies

- Cultural studies examine the ways in which culture creates and transforms individual experiences, everyday life, social relations, and power structures.
- This interdisciplinary field borrows from sociology, anthropology, communication, and more, to analyze the production and consumption of culture.

Key Theoretical Frameworks

Key frameworks in cultural studies include

- ➔ **Structuralism**
- ➔ **Post-structuralism**
- ➔ **Feminism**
- ➔ **Cultural Materialism**

These frameworks help analyze texts, performances, and artifacts, revealing the underlying social and political forces at work in cultural production.

02

Key Figures

Influential thinkers in cultural theory include Stuart Hall, Raymond Williams, and Michel Foucault, whose works have significantly shaped our understanding of culture, identity, and power dynamics. Their contributions continue to influence contemporary cultural studies.

Stuart Hall

Key Focus: Representation, encoding/decoding theory, cultural identity

Main Contributions:

- Explored how media shapes cultural perception.
- Developed the **Encoding/Decoding theory,** which examines the relationship between media producers and audiences, emphasizing the active role of audiences in interpreting messages.
  - ➔ **Dominant-Hegemonic Reading:** Audience accepts the message as intended by the producer.
  - ➔ **Negotiated Reading:** Audience adapts the message based on personal beliefs or social context.
  - ➔ **Oppositional Reading:** Audience rejects the intended message, interpreting it from an opposing perspective.

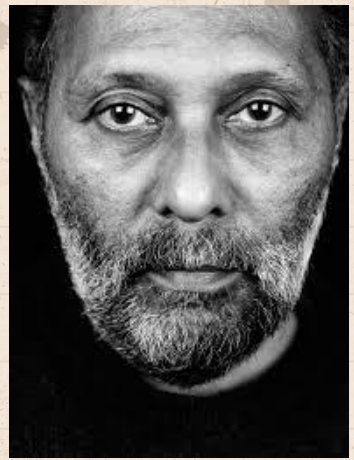

Image source :https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/stuart-hall-godfather-of-multiculturalism-who-coined-the-term-thatcherism-dies-aged-82-9120139.html

Raymond Williams

Key Focus: Cultural materialism, culture and society

Main Contributions:

- Contributed to **cultural materialism**, emphasizing the role of material conditions in shaping culture.
- Explored the relationship between culture and society, advocating for **understanding culture as a living, evolving entity** rather than a static artifact.

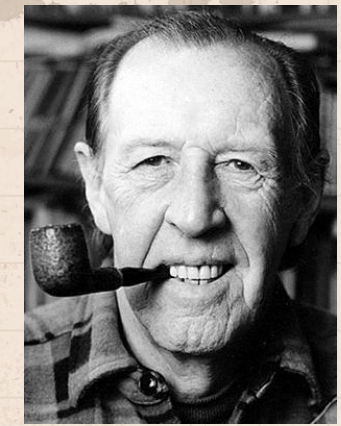

Image source: https://raymondwilliams.co.uk/about/

Michel Foucault

Key Focus: Power relations, discourse, social institutions

Main Contributions:

- Revolutionized cultural studies with his analysis of **power dynamics in society**.
- Examined how power is exercised through discourse and social institutions, shaping knowledge, identity, and cultural practices.

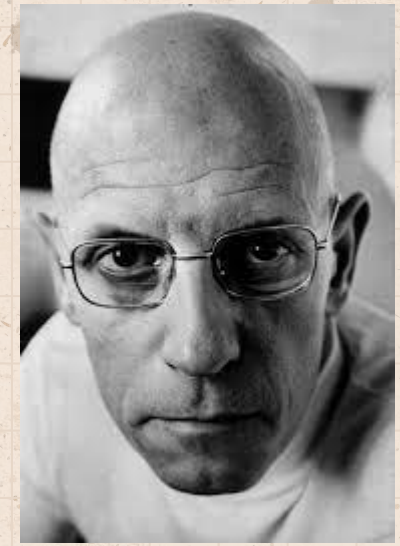

Image source: https://www.nytimes.com/2018/02/08/books/michel-foucault-new-book.html

Critical Perspectives

03

Frantz Fanon: Colonialism

Image source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frantz_Fanon

Key Focus: colonialism, identity, decolonization, violence

Main Contributions:

- Critically analyzed the psychological **effects of colonialism** and the **struggle for identity** among colonized people.
- Explored themes of **decolonization**, **violence**, and **alienation** in works like *Black Skin, White Masks*.
- Emphasized the need for revolutionary change to **overcome colonial oppression**.

Edward Said : Orientalism

Key Focus: Orientalism, Western representation of the East

Main Contributions:

- Introduced the concept of **Orientalism**, critiquing the Western portrayal of Eastern societies (the Orient) as exotic and backward.
- **Deconstructed** cultural assumptions and stereotypes that shape Western discourse about the East.
- Highlighted the **power dynamics** inherent in representation, emphasizing how the West constructs the East to **maintain dominance**.

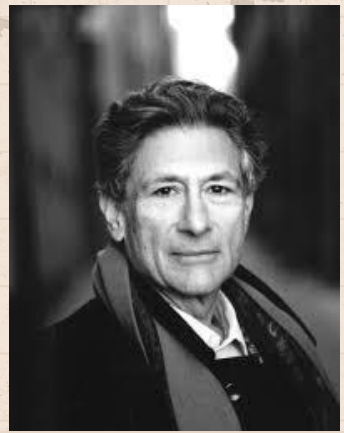

Image source: https://palestine.mei.columbia.edu/edward-said-archive

Judith Butler: Gender Theory

Image source: https://www.bennington.edu/bennington-network/outsized-impact/judith-butler

Key Focus: Gender performativity, social construction of gender

Main Contributions:

- Challenged traditional notions of gender identity through her work on **gender performativity.**
- Argued that gender is not an inherent quality but rather a **socially constructed performance**.
- Advocated for a **fluid understanding of gender,** emphasizing its complexity and variability across cultures.

Bell Hooks: Intersectional Feminism

Image source: https://www.yesmagazine.org/opinion/2022/01/18/bell-hooks-revolutionary-who-led-with-love

Key Focus: Intersection of race, class, and gender in feminist thought

Main Contributions:

- Advocated for an **inclusive feminism** that addresses the experiences of **marginalized groups**.
- Emphasized **love**, **healing**, **sisterhood** and **social justice** as central to **feminist activism**.
- Challenged dominant feminist narratives to highlight **intersectionality** in gender struggles.

04

Cultural Identity

Intersectionality in Cultural Studies

- ➔ Examines how different **social identities** (such as race, gender, class, and sexual orientation) interact and shape individual experiences.
- ➔ Focuses on how one's identity impacts their access to **power** and **resources**.
- ➔ Critical for understanding **societal inequalities** and how various forms of oppression intersect.

Representation in Media and Culture

- ➔ Plays a vital role in how **individuals see themselves** and how they are **perceived by others.**
- ➔ Analyzing representation helps **uncover stereotypes**, **biases**, and **power dynamics** in media.
- ➔ Highlights the need for **inclusive** and **accurate** portrayals of **diverse identities.**

Globalization's Impact on Culture

- ➔ Transforms cultural dynamics by facilitating the exchange of **ideas**, **values**, and **practices globally**.
- ➔ Can lead to **cultural homogenization**, but also fosters **multiculturalism** and **hybrid identities**.
- ➔ Understanding these impacts helps analyze the complexities of **contemporary cultural interactions**.

05

Cultural Critique

Class and Culture in Hoggart's Work

- ➔ Explored the relationship between **class** and **cultural expression**.
- ➔ Emphasized how **working-class culture** has distinct values and practices often marginalized by **dominant cultural narratives**.
- ➔ Advocated for the recognition and validation of **working-class cultural contributions**.

The Role of Cultural Critique Today

- ➔ Crucial in analyzing contemporary issues such as **consumerism**, **identity politics**, and **media representation**.
- ➔ Empowers individuals and communities to **question dominant narratives**.
- ➔ **Advocates for social change** by fostering a deeper understanding of cultural phenomena in a rapidly evolving world.

Conclusions

Cultural studies provide essential insights into the complexities of culture, identity, and power. By analyzing various theories and perspectives, we gain a deeper understanding of the cultural dynamics that shape our lives and societies, fostering critical awareness and social change.

Thank you!

Do you have any questions?

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